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SELF IMAGES AND COMMUNITY IMAGES OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL--FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS OF A SOCIOLOGICAL INQUIRY.

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THE SYSTEM OF RULES THAT GUIDES THE BEHAVIOR OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS WAS INVESTIGATED. THIS BODY OF RULES, TERMED "THE NORMATIVE STRUCTURE OF THE COMMUNITY AS IT PERTAINS TO SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS," WAS STUDIED BY MEANS OF AN INSTRUMENT CALLED THE "ROLE NORM INVENTORY." SEPARATE INVENTORIES WERE DEVELOPED FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS AND FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS. THE RESPONSE PATTERNS TO THE PRINCIPAL ROLE NORM INVENTORY WERE DISCUSSED IN THE FOLLOWING ORDER--(1) THE EXTENT OF AGREEMENT AMONG PRINCIPALS AND AMONG OTHER POPULATIONS REGARDING THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL, (2) THE EXTENT OF PERMISSIVENESS AMONG PRINCIPALS AND AMONG OTHER POPULATIONS, (3) DIFFERENCES IN VIEWS OF THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL, (4) THE PRINCIPAL'S PERCEPTION OF THE VIEWS OF OTHERS, AND (5) RANK ORDER AGREEMENT OF ITEMS BASED ON MEAN SCORES OBTAINED FROM THE VARIOUS POPULATIONS. RESPONSES WERE SCORED ON A SCALE OF PLUS 100 PERCENT FOR COMPLETE AGREEMENT TO MINUS 100 PERCENT FOR COMPLETE DISAGREEMENT. A SUMMARY OF THE SCORES REVEALED THAT THE LEVEL OF AGREEMENT FOR EACH SEGMENT OF THE COMMUNITY INVENTORIED RANGED FROM NEAR ZERO PERCENT TO APPROXIMATELY 80 PERCENT, THE AVERAGE FOR EACH GROUP BEING CLOSE TO 40 PERCENT. THE AUTHOR REPORTED (1) THE SCHOOL SYSTEM THAT WAS STUDIED APPEARED TO BE A STABLE, SMOOTH RUNNING ORGANIZATION OPERATING WITH A MINIMUM OF STRESS AND (2) THE SCHOOL SYSTEM APPEARED ABLE TO TOLERATE A WIDE RANGE OF VIEWS. (AL)

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This paper contains selected analyses from a larger study entitled, "The Community Normative Structure for Roles in the Public School." A preliminary version of this report was presented at two "Theory into Practice" sessions of the convention of the NEA Department of Elementary School Principals, March 22, 1966, in Portland, Oregon.

SELF IMAGES AND COMMUNITY IMAGES OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS OF A SOCIOLOGICAL INQUIRY

John M. Foskett and Harry F. Wolcott

This paper provides an initial report of findings of a research project concerning the normative structure of a community as it pertains to the role of the elementary school principal. The study was directed by the authors as part of the research program of the Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration (CASEA) at the University of Oregon. CASEA is one of several research and development centers throughout the country supported by grants from the U. S. Office of Education. The research reported is based on a study made in Salem, Oregon.

Introduction

During the past two decades more and more attention has been focused on educational administration. There has been a tendency to assume that the major problem in the field of public education is that of adequate administration and that if we could just improve the quality of school administration many difficulties and complaints would disappear.

No one can doubt the value of increasing the competence of school administrators and of improving the basic policies and strategies of administrative programs. The improvement of school administration cannot be a general panacea, however, for it is inevitable that there are sources of difficulty other than administrative practices themselves, sources which tend to be overlooked when heavy emphasis is placed on administrative expertise. As a consequence, we may be blaming administrators for difficulties that have their origin in factors outside the realm of administrative practice.

One of these factors is the state of the normative structure as it pertains to the roles of school personnel. As used here, normative structure means a body or system of rules of behavior. Sometimes these rules are referred to as expectations that individuals have for themselves and for each other. Always such norms are attached to particular positions that individuals occupy in the social system and are interrelated to form a complex or structure.

To the extent these norms are well defined and there is general agreement about them, social relations tend to be orderly. When individuals differ widely as to what is regarded as proper behavior there is a possibility of conflict and a disruption of social relations. A simple example is the game of bridge which consists of a complex or structure of norms specifying what each player ought to do under certain conditions. In many instances, however, there is a lack of agreement among players as to what these rules are. Most conflict at the bridge table arises not out of the evil nature of the individuals involved

but out of the fact that partners do not agree about certain rules, such as the rules governing bidding.

Similarly, there is a complex or structure of norms involving the behavior of teachers, principals, pupils, parents, citizens, and others in regard to the formal educational process. The nature of this structure, the kinds of expectations the members of these groups have for themselves and for each other, and the extent of agreement among the members of each group and between groups, will have an effect on the relations of individuals and the effectiveness of the total educational program.

If, for example, teachers are in strong disagreement among themselves in regard to the way they should act toward pupils, toward colleagues, toward parents, and toward the wider community, and if principals are in similar disagreement, and if citizens, parents, community leaders, members of the school board, and other groups are in marked disagreement with each other and with teachers and principals regarding their modes of behavior, then no amount of administrative expertise can eliminate the resulting tensions and conflicts. Thus it appears that it would be useful to carry out systematic studies of the normative structure of communities as it pertains to the key roles of the public schools and to relate findings from such studies to certain recurring problems like the lack of support in school budget elections or problems of teacher turnover or morale which plague some, but not all, school districts. In the present study we have carried out such an investigation. To gather the data needed we developed an instrument which we have called the Role Norm Inventory.

The Role Norm Inventory

Role Norm Inventories for elementary school teachers and for elementary school principals were developed. Each of these inventories was made up of 45 statements about how teachers or principals should act. Examples of these statements from the principal Role Norm Inventory are shown in Table 1. For each role norm statement there are 5 response categories: (1) definitely should; (2) preferably should; (3) may or may not; (4) preferably should not; and (5) definitely should not.

The two Role Norm Inventories were administered to 367 elementary school teachers; 22 supervising ("full-time") elementary school principals; 12 teaching-principals; 603 randomly selected adult citizens; a special sample of 207 parents of elementary school pupils; 56 community leaders; the 7 members of the School Board, the Superintendent of Schools, and the Assistant Superintendent in charge of the elementary schools. In each instance, each respondent was asked to indicate, by checking one of the five response categories, how he thought teachers and principals should act. In addition, the teachers and the principals were asked to indicate how they thought people in each of the other populations would respond to each of the role norm items pertaining to their own role. Thus our data include (1) the self expectations of teachers and principals; (2) the perceptions that teachers and principals have of the expectations of each of the other groups, i.e., what teachers and principals think others expect of them; and (3) what other people actually expect of teachers and principals.

Table 1

I THINK THAT AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL . . .

	definitely should	preferably should	may or may not	preferably should not	definitely should not	
11.	____	____	____	____	____	... require teachers to check the office before leaving school at the end of the day.
12.	____	____	____	____	____	... check teacher performance periodically by unannounced classroom visits.
13.	____	____	____	____	____	... require teachers to submit weekly lesson plans to him.
14.	____	____	____	____	____	... insist that teachers of the same grade level follow an identical program of studies.
15.	____	____	____	____	____	... periodically request his teachers to evaluate his performance as a principal.

AN ANALYSIS OF RESPONSE PATTERNS

The response patterns to the principal Role Norm Inventory are discussed here in the following order: (1) the extent of agreement among principals and among other populations regarding the role of principal; (2) the extent of "permissiveness" among principals and among other populations; (3) differences in views of the role of principal; (4) principal perceptions of the views of others; and (5) rank order agreement of items based on mean scores obtained from the various populations.

Extent of Agreement

There is always a tendency to over-generalize when attempting to characterize populations such as school principals, teachers, parents, citizens, or community leaders. Certain opinions and ways of acting become identified with a given population, leaving the impression that all members of the population are alike. While such perfect agreement is rather unlikely, little is known regarding the extent to which there is agreement among groups in regard to matters of basic concern. Thus it is of some interest to examine data that reflect the actual extent of agreement among elementary school principals and among the other groups.

The measure of agreement which we have used is based on a cumulative relative frequency of responses over the five response categories. The measure yields an Agreement Score with a theoretical range from minus one to plus one. If half of the responses of a given population

on an item are definitely should and the other half are definitely should not, the Agreement Score for the item would be minus one. If the responses are equally divided among all five response categories (20% in each), the score would be zero. If all responses are in any single response category the score would be plus one. It may be helpful to think of these scores as per cent scores ranging from minus 100 per cent to plus 100 per cent agreement.

Table 2 shows, for each population, the lowest Agreement Score on any single role norm item, the highest Agreement Score for any role norm item, and the mean Agreement Score for all 45 role norms. The level of agreement for all populations ranges from near zero per cent to approximately 80 per cent; the average clusters around 40 per cent. For an assumedly representative list of norms for the role of elementary school principal, it is significant to note that all populations have a wide range of agreement from one role norm to another and that the average level of agreement for each population is less than 50 per cent. When the same analysis was made of responses to the Role Norm Inventory for teachers, a similar range of Agreement Scores and similar mean Agreement Scores were found. Because comparable data for other school systems are not yet available it is not possible to judge whether these levels of agreement are high or low.

Table 2

Range of Agreement and Mean Agreement Scores for 45 PRINCIPAL Role Norms by Populations.

Population	Per Cent Agreement		
	Lowest	Highest	Mean
Principals	05	81	45
Citizens'	11	67	38
Parents	18	78	42
Leaders	08	85	37
School Board	-34[a]	88	42
Teachers	12	86	48

[a]The only instance of a minus Agreement Score reflects the disparate views of the School Board members regarding whether principals should discourage parents from telephoning them at home.

It should be pointed out that the Salem school system appears to be a relatively stable, smooth running organization with a minimum of stress within the system or between the system and the wider community. The community has consistently supported the schools in budget elections. It is of interest that this is possible given the variation of views within and between populations. It would appear that the school system can tolerate a relatively wide range of views.

Extent of Permissiveness

One tends to think of role norms in terms of "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not." In the actual world of human relations, however, there tends to be a wide range from a strong insistence on certain norms to broad permissiveness for other norms. Of all the responses of all principals to the principal Role Norm Inventory, only 26.4 per cent were in the definitely should or definitely should not categories (Table 3). This means that in only one quarter of the responses did principals indicate a strong preference about what they should or should not do. In 44.9 per cent of the responses the position was taken that principals preferably should or preferably should not do what the role norm indicated. While they approved or disapproved of the specified behavior they did not insist. Finally, in 29.1 per cent of the cases the responses were "permissive" -- they left the behavior choice to the individual himself. The distribution of responses for the other populations is similar to that of the principals, differing only in the higher per cent of permissive responses indicated by each of the other populations. These data indicate a certain amount of built-in flexibility in the normative structure, a flexibility that may tend to minimize strain within the system.

Table 3

Per Cent Distribution of Responses by Response Categories to the PRINCIPAL Role Norm Inventory by Populations.

Population	Response Categories		
	(1 and 5) Definitely Should and Definitely Should Not	(2 and 4) Preferably Should and Preferably Should Not	(3) May or May Not
Principals	26.4	44.9	29.1
Citizens	24.4	40.2	35.4
Parents	22.3	39.3	38.4
Teachers	24.3	40.7	35.0
Leaders	25.1	39.3	35.6
School Board	26.7	31.2	42.2

Table 4 shows the distribution of responses by response categories for the teacher Role Norm Inventory. The distribution is similar to that for the principal Role Norm Inventory. The major difference is a slightly lower per cent of responses in the "preferable" and "permissive" categories and a slightly higher per cent of responses in the "definite" categories compared with the responses to the principal inventory. Both principals and teachers are less permissive concerning their own role than are the other populations.

Table 4

Per Cent Distribution of Response by Response Categories to the TEACHER Role Norm Inventory by Populations.

Population	Response Categories (1 and 5) Definitely Should and Definitely Should Not	(2 and 4) Preferably Should and Preferably Should Not	(3) May or May not
Principals	26.1	38.8	35.2
Citizens	31.6	36.6	31.8
Parents	29.0	35.6	35.4
Teachers	31.2	37.3	31.4
Leaders	28.7	37.6	33.7
School Board	24.7	38.2	37.2

Differences in Views of the Role of Principal

We turn now to a comparison of the responses of principals and the responses of other populations to the principal Role Norm Inventory. In order to make this comparison we will use what we call a Mean Response Score, an average of all responses by a given population to a given role norm item. The procedure is to assign the numerical values of one to five to each of the five response categories in turn, beginning with definitely should, and to calculate the average (mean) of the responses. A Mean Response Score of 1.40, for example, indicates a point between definitely should and preferably should, showing that most members of a

given population strongly approve. To get a Mean Response Score of 1.40 most respondents would have to choose the category definitely should and a sizeable number of other choices would have to be in the category preferably should.

In order to compare two populations, such as principals and teachers, we determine the average amount of difference per role norm between the Mean Response Scores of the two populations. Table 5 shows the average difference per role norm item between what principals think they should do and what others think principals should do. The largest average difference is between the views of the principals and the view of the Superintendent, the difference being .95 or nearly one full response category. The role norm item where there is the largest difference between the principals and the Superintendent is whether principals should "review all report cards before they are sent home to parents." Here the difference is 3.19, the Mean Response Score of principals being 1.81 (preferably should) while the Superintendent responded that they definitely should not. Another example of a large difference is the norm pertaining to principals permitting parents to see any school records which the school has concerning their children. The Mean Response Score for principals is 3.77 (preferably should not) while the Superintendent said preferably should. The role norm statement "review with each teacher any written evaluation he makes of that teacher's work" is an example of an item with little difference between the principals and the Superintendent. Eight-two per cent (82%) of the principals responded definitely should. The Superintendent also responded definitely should.

For the norm regarding principals being "present at school at all times pupils are in class" there is low agreement among principals but the Mean Response Score is 3.0, the same as that of the Superintendent.

Table 5

Average Difference in Mean Response Score Per Role Norm Between What Principals Think They Should Do and What Others Think They Should Do

	Average Difference Per Norm
Principal and Superintendent	.95
Principal and School Board	.65
Principal and Leaders	.57
Principal and Parents	.54
Principal and Citizens	.57
Principal and Teachers	.33

In discussing with the principals the extent of the differences between their views and those of the Superintendent, they suggest that because they work more closely with the Assistant Superintendent in charge of elementary schools they expected us to find less difference between their views and his than we reported between their views and those of the Superintendent. This turned out to be true but not to the extent that the principals had expected. The average difference between

the Mean Response Scores for the principals and the responses of the Assistant Superientendent was .71, a smaller difference than for the Superintendent (.95) but still larger than the differences for other populations.

The next largest difference (.65) is between the principals and the members of the School Board. For the three lay populations (leaders, parents, and citizens) the average differences are intermediate (.57, .54, and .57, respectively). The smallest difference (.33) is between the principals and teachers. It is striking that there is more difference between principals and both the central administration and the School Board than between principals and members of the lay community.

Principals' Perceptions of the Views of Others

In addition to the views that principals have of their own role and the views that others have of the role, an important part of the total normative structure is the perceptions that principals have of the views of others. It would be possible, for example, for citizens to be in high agreement with principals regarding the principal role without the latter being aware of either the nature or extent of such agreement. Principals could misperceive the views of others in such a way that any adjustment made to what they considered to be the views of others would be an adjustment to something that does not exist.

Table 6 shows the average difference per role norm between what principals think others will say and what others actually say about the role

of principal. Again, the largest mean difference per role norm is between the principals and the Superintendent (.94). The least difference is between the principals and the teachers (.26). The difference between principals and members of the lay community is intermediate. Not only do the views of the principals differ most from the views of the Superintendent and members of the School Board, but principals have the greatest difficulty in perceiving these differences. Conversely, although the principals' views differ least from the views of teachers, they are most successful in predicting the differences that do exist.

Table 6

Average Difference in Mean Response Score Per Role Norm Between What Principals Think Others Would Say and What Others Acutally Say About the Role of Principal

	Average Difference Per Norm
Principal and Superintendent	.94
Principal and School Board	.57
Principal and Leaders	.50
Principal and Parents	.40
Principal and Citizens	.41
Principal and Teachers	.26

Another comparison is between the way principals view their own role and how they think others view their role. This comparison explains in part the source of the error on the part of principals in predicting the responses of others.

Table 7 shows the average difference per role norm between how principals think they should act and how they think others will say they should act. Here the least difference is between the principals' responses to their own role norms and what they think will be the responses of the Superintendent. The average difference per role norm is .24. Apparently principals believe that the Superintendent will respond much as they do and therefore they do not recognize the actual extent of the difference. The largest differences are between the principals' responses and their predictions of the responses of the lay groups of the community, the differences being .50 for citizens, .48 for parents, and .49 for leaders. Principals seem to be aware of the fact the lay populations have different views and have taken this into account when attempting to predict their responses.

Table 7

Average Difference in Mean Response Score Per Role Norm Between What Principals Think They Should Do and What They Think Others Would Say

	Average Difference Per Norm
Principal and Citizen	.50
Principal and Parent	.48
Principal and Leaders	.49
Principal and School Board	.36
Principal and Teacher	.31
Principal and Superintendent	.24

Rank Order Agreement

Another method of comparing the responses of populations is to rank each of the 45 role norms by Mean Response Scores for each population and then compare the rank order for one population with the rank order of another population.[1] If such a ranking is the same for any two groups the association would be perfect and the rho would be 1.0. As the similarity of the rank order decreases, the value of rho approaches zero to indicate the decreasing similarity of responses.

The rank order of the items of the principal Role Norm Inventory, based on the Mean Response Score of the principals for each item, was compared with the rank order of the same items by the Mean Response Scores for each of the other populations (Table 8). The association

Table 8

Rank Order Agreement for Principal and Teacher Role Norm Items

Association between:	RANK ORDER ASSOCIATIONS (Spearman rho) Principal Ranking of Principal Role Norm Items	Teacher Ranking of Teacher Role Norm Items
Teachers	.83	---
Principals	---	.91
Leaders	.48	.72
School Board Members	.46	.79
Parents	.44	.77
Citizens	.44	.77

[1]The statistic used is the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient or rho, a measure of association, as described in Sidney Siegel, Non-Parametric Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1956.

between the rank order of the items for principals and for teachers is .83, a relatively high degree of association. A comparison of principals with the lay populations yields rhos of .48 for leaders, .46 for the School Board, .44 for parents, and .44 for citizens. These data indicate a high degree of association between the responses of principals and teachers and a low association between the responses of principals and each of the non-school populations.

Table 8 also shows comparable data for the association between the teachers and other groups for the items on the teacher Role Norm Inventory. The association between teacher responses and principal responses was high (.91). The association between the responses of teachers and the responses of the lay community groups ranges from .72 to .79. These correlations are consistently and appreciably higher than the correlations between the lay groups and principals concerning items of principal behavior. While there is a high degree of association between teachers and principals concerning teacher role items, there is also a relatively high degree of association between the responses of teachers and all other groups concerning aspects of the teacher role.

We were also interested in the similarity of responses among citizens, parents, and leaders concerning the principal role norm items as compared to the teacher items. The rank order coefficient[2] obtained for citizens, parents, and leaders for the principal role norm items was .90. The rank order coefficient for the lay groups for the teacher role norm items was .93. These scores indicate a similarity

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[2]The statistic used is the Kendall coefficient of concordance, or W, a measure of consensus, as described in Sidney Siegel, op. cit.

of Mean Response Scores among citizens, parents, and leaders in their expectations not only for teachers but for principals as well. A comparison of a composite rank order of all lay groups with the rank order of teacher responses for the teacher Role Norm Inventory shows an association of .78. The corresponding association between the lay groups and the principal responses to the principal Role Norm Inventory is .41. The rank order analysis reveals a high similarity of responses among the lay groups for both the teacher role and the principal role. Further, the self-image of teachers appears to correspond to the teacher image held by the community, while the self-image of the principals does not show such a correspondence.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONTENT OF RESPONSES

While our research interest has not been primarily concerned with the content of responses to individual items on the Role Norm Inventories we do find some patterns in the content of the responses, and these patterns have implications for the community images of principals and teachers.

Role Norms of High Agreement

Table 9 shows the ten role norm items on which principals were in highest agreement among themselves. The highest agreement among principals is on the item "... encourage parents to visit their children's classroom at any time." The Agreement Score is 81 per cent on this item. The mean Response Score among principals for this item is 1.2, the nearest to definitely should of all their responses. For this same item the

Table 9

Ten Principal Role Norm Items of Highest Agreement Among 22 Principals

Role Norm	Agreement (Per Cent)	Mean Response Score
... encourage parents to visit their children's classroom at any time.	81	1.2
... review with each teacher any written evaluation he makes of that teacher's work.	78	1.3
... develop an educational program designed to meet the needs of the pupils in his school rather than adopt a standard program.	74	1.3
... freely express in the community his views regarding controversial issues.	74	3.3
... serve alcoholic beverages in his home.	74	3.2
... learn the name of every child in the school.	70	2.0
... attend church regularly,	66	2.6
... take an active part in community organizations.	66	2.1
... live within the school district.	62	2.6
... review all report cards before they are sent home to parents.	62	1.8

citizens were in low agreement (24 per cent) and had a Mean Response Score of 2.3 (preferably should). Thus, while the members of the community are favorably inclined toward this behavior for principals,, they evidence neither the high agreement nor such strong preference as do the principals. This may be a "party line" item for school personnel in the district, since the responses of both the central administration and the School Board are favorable toward encouraging parents to visit. Teachers

also responded favorably to this item, although their Mean Response Score of 2.0 (preferably should) suggests that they are not as strongly approving as are principals.

Another item of high agreement among principals (78 per cent) is: "... review with each teacher any written evaluation he makes of that teacher's work." The Mean Response Score for principals is 1.3 (definitely should). Like the item about encouraging parents to visit, this is an item of high agreement and positive feeling. Among citizens this item is tenth highest in agreement (46 per cent) and the Mean Response Score is 1.8 (preferably should). The relatively high agreement and the similarity of the Mean Response Scores on this item for both the principal and the citizen groups provide an example of a role norm item on which there is agreement among the principals, agreement among the citizens, and a similarity of the expectations held by each group. It might appear on first thought that such high agreement and similarity ity of response as we find on this item represent an ideal situation, while the diversity which marks the responses between populations on so many other items in an undesirable state of affairs. We will turn to this point later as well as to the observation that for this item, and for several other examples which will follow, the principals make more rigorous demands on themselves than their various publics demand of them.

Role Norms of Low Agreement

Next, let us examine some items of low agreement among the principals. On items with high agreement the value of the Mean Response Score suggests how most principals or how most citizens answered. On items with low agreement scores, responses are distributed throughout many or

all categories. By the process of averaging we would expect Mean Response Scores for low agreement items to be close to 3.0, the middle of the response range. This is in fact the case, as shown in the Mean Response Scores for principals to the ten items of lowest agreement (Table 10).

Table 10

Ten Principal Role Norm Items of Lowest Agreement Among 22 Principals

Role Norm	Agreement (Per Cent)	Mean Response Score
... permit a teacher to leave his classroom unattended.	28	3.3
*... send children home if they misbehave seriously (if parents are home).	28	2.9
... discuss school matters informally with School Board members.	24	2.8
... conform to stricter standards in his private life than most other people in the community.	21	3.2
... devote a major portion of his time to public relations for his school.	20	2.9
*... share in the extra duties around the school, such as lunchroom and playground supervision.	17	2.5
... partiticpate in the meetings of teacher organizations in which teachers discuss their problems.	17	3.5
... require teachers in his school to attend PTA meetings.	13	3.0
*... assume primary responsibility for keeping the PTA or parent group active.	5	3.0
... send to the Superintendent a copy of all formal written communications to parents.	5	3.0

*Indicates an item which also appears among the ten lowest in agreement in the responses of citizens.

Among the principals, the two items of least agreement had agreement scores of 5 per cent, some principals responding in each of the five categories. The two items are "... send to the Superintendent a copy of all formal written communications to parents" and "... assume primary responsibility for keeping the PTA or parent group active."

Three of the items that were among the ten lowest in agreement scores for principals also were among the low agreement items for the community sample. These three items of mutually low agreement (indicated by an asterisk in Table 10) are: "... send children home if they misbehave seriously (if parents are home)," "... share in the extra duties around the school, such as lunchroom and playground supervision," and "... assume primary responsibility for keeping the PTA or parent group active." For these three behaviors school principals might take some comfort in knowing that there is a lack of consensus both within the principal group and among community members. Optimistically one might take these responses as an indication of the latitude for individual choice in certain aspects of the principal's role. Such a lack of consensus can also be interpreted pessimistically to illustrate, as every principal is well aware, that for some of the choices he must make, none of the alternatives among which he most choose will be completely satisfactory to all his audiences.

Low agreement scores or middle-range Mean Response Scores may mask certain kinds of difference, particularly of splits within the group where some individuals respond <u>should</u> and a similar number respond <u>should not</u>. For example, for the low agreement item "... devote a major portion of his time to public relations for his school," the responses among principals show an agreement score of 20 per cent and a Mean Response Score

of 2.9, suggesting an "average" answer of may or may not. Actually the principals were about equally divided in their answers between preferably should and preferably should not, each of these categories receiving over 40 per cent of the principal responses. Since the public relations aspect of their position is one of major concern to many principals, the per cent distribution of responses to this item by each of the populations interviewed is presented in detail on the following page (Table 11). The distributions illustrate the variation typical of the responses to most of the role norm items.

An examination of Table 11 shows that the principals misperceived the expectations of each of the lay groups regarding whether a principal should devote a major portion of time to public relations. In each case the modal response of the principals as they anticipated the views of the various lay groups was in the preferably should category. While the responses of citizens, parents, and leaders were distributed throughout all five categories, the modal response for citizens and parents was in the may or may not category, and the modal response of community leaders was preferably should not.

Most principals thought that School Board members would say that a principal preferably should devote a major portion of time to public relations. Only one School Board member actually gave this answer, while the balance were divided between may or may not and definitely should not. Most principals thought the teachers and the Superintendent would respond preferably should. The modal response of the teachers was in the may or may not category. The Superintendent indicated that he does not think principals should devote a major portion of their time to public relations.

Table 11

. . . devote a major portion of his time to public relations for his school

	NUMBER RESPONDING	PER CENT DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES: Definitely should	Preferably Should	May or May Not	Preferably Should Not	Definitely Should Not	MEAN RESPONSE SCORE	AGREEMENT SCORE (Per Cent)
Principals think	22	4.5	45.5	9.1	40.9	----	2.9	20
Principals think CITIZENS will say	22	4.5	54.5	13.6	27.3	----	2.7	39
CITIZENS actually say	602	6.5	31.4	44.0	14.5	3.7	2.8	45
Principals think PARENTS will say	22	4.5	40.9	18.1	36.4	----	2.9	28
PARENTS actually say	206	4.9	25.2	50.0	15.5	4.4	2.9	51
Principals think LEADERS will say	22	4.5	54.5	18.1	22.7	----	2.6	43
LEADERS actually say	56	3.6	10.7	33.8	35.7	16.1	3.5	32
Principals think BOARD will say	22	9.1	40.9	22.7	22.7	4.5	2.7	24
SCHOOL BOARD actually says	7	---	14.3	42.9	----	42.9	3.7	17
Principals think TEACHERS will say	22	4.5	50.0	13.6	27.3	4.5	2.8	28
TEACHERS actually say	366	1.6	27.0	45.1	20.8	5.5	3.0	48
Principals think SUPERINTENDENT will say	22	9.1	45.5	13.6	31.8	----	2.7	28

Items of Greatest Disagreement Between Principals and the Community

The role norm item on the principal inventory for which there was the greatest difference between the Mean Response Score of the principals and that of the community was the item "... allow parents to see any school records which the school has concerning their own children." The responses of the principal show a bi-modal distribution with 31.8 per cent of the responses in the may or may not category and 31.8 per cent of the responses in the definitely should not category. Over half the principals responded in one of the two negative categories, indicating they felt parents should not be allowed to see any school records, and over half of the teachers responded definitely should not. The modal responses of the several lay groups were either preferably should or definitely should. The principals correctly anticipated that the lay groups would be in favor of being allowed to see school records, although they tended to underestimate how strongly people would feel about it. They incorrectly estimated that School Board members and the central administration would respond that the principal should not allow parents to see school records. Both the central administration and the School Board expressed a preference for allowing parents to see school records. The responses indicate a lack of agreement between school building personnel and lay groups, including the School Board, concerning the management or control of one important type of "private knowledge" held by school personnel.

The item with the next largest difference is "... review all report cards before they are sent home to parents." Most principals (54.5 per cent) responded that they preferably should review all report cards before

they are sent home. Most teachers responded that the principal definitely should or preferably should review report cards. However, the modal responses of leaders, parents, citizens, and the School Board are all in the permissive may or may not category, with responses skewed toward preferably should not. In regard to the reviewing of report cards, the principals feel they should exercise control and the teachers are inclined to accept their control (with only 5 per cent of the teachers choosing a "should not" category), while the lay community indicates a preference for the may or may not or a slightly negative response.[3]

Another item of marked difference is "... discourage parents from telephoning him at his home." Most principals indicated that they preferably should not discourage parents from such telephoning. Even though agreement is low and there are responses in all categories, the prevailing response by the lay groups was that principals "should" discourage parents from telephoning them at home. Over 50 per cent of the subjects in each lay group responded either definitely should or preferably should. It appears that principals hold an expectation that their public may "follow them home" in the evening, an expectation not widely held in the community. Yet, 59 per cent of the principals indicated that they should not have to "spend time evenings and weekends working on school matters," which suggests that there are limits to what principals expect of themselves.

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[3]We were interested in the reaction of the principals to the use of our term "control" when we reported these data to them. In conversation the principals cautioned that "control" suggests the wrong connotation. They interpreted their response on this item as an illustration of their concern for the impression their teachers make in the community. As one principal stated: "We only want to see the report cards to check on the image the teachers will present."

Even the teachers, whose responses as a group are usually similar to those of the principals, disagree with the principals about parents telephoning the principal at home. Two-thirds of the teachers responded that principals definitely should or preferably should discourage the calls, in contrast to the fact that over 70 per cent of the principals responded definitely should not or preferably should not. Apparently teachers favor that principals discourage such telephoning even more than do the lay groups. Whether the teachers felt that principals should be protected from an invasion of their private life or whether the responses of the teachers reflect feelings about being called at home themselves is not clear from an inspection of the data. However, to a related item on the teacher Role Norm Inventory, two-thirds of the teachers responded they "should" insist that parents contact them at school rather than at home. Perhaps both the privacy of principals and of the teachers themselves are involved in the "dissenting" response of the teachers.

Another item where there is a major difference between principals and other populations is "... participate in the meetings of teacher organizations in which teachers discuss their problems." While the level of agreement was low among principals (17 per cent), over 80 per cent responded may or may not, preferably should not, or definitely should not, and 50 per cent responded in one of the two "should not" categories. At the same time, the principals expected the lay groups to respond may or may not. Actually, the lay groups were more in favor of principals participating in teacher organizations than principals were aware. The prevailing response of all lay groups was preferably should and almost

one quarter responded definitely should. The principals anticipated that teachers would be opposed strongly (Mean Response Score 4.04) to their participation in teacher meetings. Although the agreement score among teachers is low (18 per cent) and there were responses in all categories, the most typical response was may or may not and the Mean Response Score was 3.18. This difference in the views of teachers and principals exists even though there is an institutionalized separation between administrators and teachers for professional meetings in the school district.

SOME INTERPRETATIONS

Broadly, the most important result of the study reported above is the picture gained of the real normative world in the subject community as it pertains to the role of elementary school principal: the discovery that the levels of agreement for individual role norms range from near zero (with the one exception noted) to near 100 per cent; that the average level of agreement is below 50 per cent; and that the level of agreement among educators is not much different than among lay groups. In brief, the real world of norms does not correspond to the popularly accepted model of high consensus.

One of the original hypotheses of this study, as indicated at the beginning of this report, was that there would be a positive relation between level of agreement and the extent of orderly and effective relations among individuals. Given the nature and extent of the differences in views of the role of elementary school principal as uncovered in this inquiry, one might expect that principals would have some difficulty

working with each other, with teachers, with the central administration, and with the public. Such was the reaction of the principals themselves when the findings were reported to them. The relative lack of agreement among them, the differences of views between themselves and others, and their limited ability to predict the responses of others, seemed to them to be a bad sign and led to their asking: "What can we do to achieve higher agreement and more accurate perceptions of the views of others?"

In view of the original hypothesis and the expressed concern of the principals, it is of interest that the actual day-to-day relations among and between the several populations in the subject community appear to be orderly and effective. The data from a variety of sources indicate a high level of morale among school personnel, a high level of support of the school program on the part of the lay public, and a general lack of conflict or stress.

This does not mean that the hypothesis must be discarded. We do not have comparative data from a series of communities, and therefore it is not possible to judge whether the levels of agreement found are high or low. Even though many of the agreement scores seem relatively low as measured, it may be that these levels are "high" when compared with scores for other communities. Thus, additional data are required before the hypothesis can be accepted or rejected.

Agreement and a Diversity of Views

Although the hypothesis must await further testing, the fact that people can live together and interact in an effective and harmonious

fashion even when agreement is at the level found in this study calls for some explanation. One explanation is suggested by the tenets of pluralism.

From the point of view of pluralism, a diversity of views, within given limits, provides a degree of flexibility whereas full consensus leads to rigidity and hence to stress in the presence of even the slightest deviancy. If parents, for example, were in complete agreement regarding the norms for elementary school principals and if principals did not conform to such norms, strong conflict would result. Or, given a high level of agreement among principals, a particular principal who deviated from these norms would generate tension and would interfere with orderly working relationships. The existence of at least a degree of diversity may then be the basis of toleration and mutual acceptance of alternative modes of behavior.

At the same time, if there were little or no agreement within and between groups, there would be no basis for mutual effort. Behavior would be unpredictable, and the result would be anarchy. Perhaps the optimum state of the normative structure, as far as effective working relationships in the school setting are concerned, is somewhere between very low and very high agreement.

Related to the question of level of agreement is the question of how strongly individuals insist on a given mode of behavior. If parents not only were in full agreement regarding principal norms but also insisted that principals either <u>definitely should</u> or <u>definitely should not</u> act in particular ways, with no parents making any provision for the permissiveness implied by the <u>preferably should</u>, <u>preferably should not</u>,

or may or may not responses, then any deviation by principals would elicit strong reactions and an impairment of working relationships.

At the other extreme, if all individuals were completely permissive, a state of anomie would exist in which no one cared what another did. As with level of agreement, it may be that the optimum state as far as orderly human relations are concerned is somewhere between complete permissiveness and a total lack of permissiveness. In the subject community, as has been indicated, such an intermediate view exists and may be another reason for the apparent stability of the system.

Differing Expectations for Responsibility and Authority

A second major insight provided by the data reported here results from an examination of those role norms which show the largest differences between the views of the school personnel and the lay community. This comparison hints that elementary school principals may be eager and willing to incur greater but special obligations in fulfilling their administrative roles but concomitantly they expect to exercise more control than the community-at-large expects or sanctions.

For example, principals feel they should not discourage parents from telephoning them at home, an obligation the principals indicated they are willing to incur but which the community does not require. Principals feel they definitely should encourage parents to visit their children's classroom at any time, while the responses among the lay groups indicate a less-demanding preferably should. The same pattern is reflected in a comparison of responses to another item on which

differences in Mean Response Scores are large: "... develop an educational program designed to meet the needs of the pupils in his school rather than adopt a standard program." Principals said, with high agreement, that they definitely should develop a unique program in their schools. Members of the lay community are favorable toward, but not as insistent upon, such leadership.

While the responses of the principals often indicate that they are more demanding of themselves than the expectations held for them by others, many of their responses indicate that they expect to exercise more control over school affairs and over teachers than the lay community expects. On the following items, for example, the lower Mean Response Score obtained for the principals indicates their more favorable disposition toward each of these behaviors than is indicated by the response of any lay group to the same item: "... review report cards before they are sent home," "... check teacher performance periodically by unannounced classroom visits," and "... require teachers to submit weekly lesson plans."

A difference in responses about whether parents should be allowed to see school records concerning their children was described earlier. Teachers and principals are in some agreement that parents should not be allowed to see any records, while consensus in the community is that parents should be allowed to see them. This is another example of control which the principal expects to exercise but which is not supported by community consensus.

The Principal's Role: Betwixt and Between

In general, the comparison of responses between members of the lay community and the principals reveals that the lay community does not see the principal as an authoritative figure to the extent that he sees himself. This more restricted image of the principalship held by members of the lay community provokes a further question: Does the community see the role of principal as separate and distinct from the instructional role of teachers?

A hypothesis that the principal sees himself as an administrator while others see him as a member of the instructional staff would provide an explanation both for the differences in views regarding the role of principal and for the difficulties principals have in predicting the responses of others. This hypothesis has emerged from a detailed analysis of the data after they were gathered; it was not part of the original research design. For this reason the number and kind of role norms required to test the hypothesis were not incorporated into the study. The responses to one role norm ("... share in the extra duties around the school, such as lunchroom and playgroup supervision") which might have been expected to reveal a difference, revealed instead a similar Mean Response Score (2.5) for both principals and citizens. However, responses to another norm are consistent with our speculation. This is the item about whether principals should participate in the meetings of teacher organizations in which teachers discuss their problems. Fifty per cent of the principals said they "should not" participate in these meetings, from which we infer that either the principals

accept the separation of teachers and administrators as it occurs in professional meetings in the district as "natural" or that they think of themselves as a group apart from the instructional staff. By contrast, members of the community indicated that principals preferably should attend these meetings.

The over-all differences in views suggest that the role of the principal is an interstitial role in that it exists between two other roles, the role of teacher, which is primarily instructional in nature, and the policy-making role of an administrator (the Superintendent or the School Board). Being an interstitial role, it tends to be associated in part with each of the adjoining roles but not completly identified with either. It is somewhat like the factory foreman who is identified partially with both workers and management but not entirely identified with either. The consequence in the factory situation is that workers tend to see the foreman as part of management and management tends to see him as part of labor. A degree of ambiguity as to the nature of the role of foreman results. As applied to school principals, the point, as stated above, is that both teachers and principals may see the principal as an "administrator" and thus share similar views as to how he should act. The central administration, the School Board, and the lay groups may see the principal more as part of the "instructional staff," with the result that their views are somewhat at variance from those of the principals themselves.

There are a number of other roles in our society in addition to those of foreman and elementary school principal where ambiguity results from

the interstitial nature of the role. A typical consequence of this not uncommon state of affairs is the absence of clear guidelines as to what individuals having such roles should do. In the absence of a clearly defined role there is always a tendency to play it safe and not to do too much to risk the ire of others by doing something that is not generally accepted as proper. Given the divergent expectations held by different groups within the community and within the fraternity of educators, and greatly complicated by the self-image of principals which differs somewhat from every other group, it may be that no definite, stable, completely acceptable job description for the principalship can exist.

At a time when the profession is asking for innovation in the instructional processes and when the schools are being asked to strengthen the educational program, ambivalence regarding the role of elementary school principal may be unfortunate if it means that the capacities of principals cannot be fully utilized.